

**Freshman Composition**  
**Exit-Level Competencies**  
**February 4, 2008**

The following competencies are the writing, thinking, communication, and literacy skills identified and recommended by a group of high school teachers, community, and four-year college English instructors. Upon successfully completing the required freshman composition course or sequence of courses, students should have attained the following skills.

- 1) Demonstrate critical and analytical thinking for reading, writing, and speaking.
  - Participate in active reading and discussion of a variety of texts.
  - Incorporate ideas and information from readings into own writing.
  - Identify purpose, main idea, and supporting evidence
  - Distinguish between fact and opinion and recognize textual biases
  - Distinguish between general and specific information
  - Summarize and paraphrase information
  - Analyze and evaluate their own and others' speaking and writing
  - Communicate effectively in groups by listening, reflecting, and responding appropriately
  - Formulate diagnostic questions for resolving issues and identify possible solutions
- 2) Develop and employ a wide-ranging vocabulary
- 3) Compose sound and effective sentences
  - Use a variety of sentence structures correctly
  - Understand and employ subordination and coordination to express ideas
  - Avoid major sentence-level errors such as fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, etc.
  - Communicate with few errors in grammar, usage, diction, and mechanics
- 4) Compose unified, coherent, and developed paragraphs.
  - Write focused topic sentences
  - Maintain focus and unity of paragraph
  - Use details, examples, and facts to develop the paragraph's main idea
  - Select and use appropriate patterns of organization for subject audience, and purpose
  - Use transitional devices
- 5) Understand and use a recursive writing process to develop strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading texts.
- 6) Produce rhetorically effective discourse for subject, audience, and purpose.
  - Organize a logically structured essay that includes an introduction, body, and conclusion
  - Develop an essay's controlling idea (thesis or claim) with a balance of generalizations and adequate specific, illustrative details
  - Use transitional devices to achieve coherency, unity, and focus

- Use a variety of rhetorical strategies to analyze and respond to topics and texts
- Support position using relevant evidence and a reasoned argument

7) Demonstrate effective research and information literacy skills.

- Formulate a manageable research question
- Access appropriate sources
- Evaluate and analyze information for credibility and accuracy
- Synthesize information from a variety of sources and apply the synthesis to complex situations and problems
- Cite primary and secondary sources using appropriate documentation style such as MLA, Chicago Manual, APA, etc.